

Sri Rai Ramananda

by Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakura

FOREWORD

This brochure is not to be considered as a hagiological attempt [narration of the lives and legends of the saints] but an endeavor for inculcating the procedure of following the life of a transcendental devotee who had a thoroughly peculiar mood of service of the Absolute, unknown to the vitiated mundane atmosphere.

Readers, who are puzzled with the problem of finding out the solution of this ephemeral life, the antecedents and the consequences of which are not stored up, are respectfully solicited to go through these pages, not with a challenging mood but with an approaching aptitude, to be acquainted with the undiscovered track of devotion. A submissive and attentive audiencing will surely facilitate comprehension of the transcendental procedure, aiding one's journey to his hitherto unexplored 'transcendence.

The Absolute must not be obliged come under finitudinal examination by our poor senses. So the epistemology will explain for a thorough submission instead of exhibiting a flickering tendency of shallow versatility.

The humble and feeble entreaty of an insignificant informant may be found useful to its approver, which will fully repay his undertaking.

The loving thanks of the writer are due to Professor Nishi Kanta Sanyal, M.A., who has kindly helped him in going through the proofs.

BHAKTI SIDDHANTA SARASWATI

SRI GAUDIYA MATH, MADRAS,

CHAPTER I THE LORD AND HIS BELOVED

(Viewed by Empiricists)

Four centuries ago, about the year 1512 A.D., the western bank of the Godavari at Kovvur, on the most memorable day in the History of the world, witnessed a remarkable march of a band of Vedic Brahmanas chanting mantrams, attended with a performing concert of numerous Indian musical instruments playing before the procession in State of the Governor of Godavari Province of the Empire of the Ganga dynasty of Utkal. This pompous procession was meant as the accompaniment for a ceremonial bath in the sacred Godavari whose sanctity is well established from time immemorial.

The bather was a no less conspicuous entity than the Governor of the mighty Emperor of Orissa, Sri Prataparudra Deva the greatest Ruler of the famous Ganga Dynasty whose members bore the proud designation of the Gajapatis or Lords of Elephants.

The spectacle visualized the fact that the occasion was intended for seeking an accession of Virtue and piety by a great Luminary of the Imperial Firmament who evidently wanted to popularize himself to be a religious personage guiding the reins of the administration of a great King.

Just before the party was approaching the holy bathing ghat of Gospada opposite to Kotilingam at Rajmundry, an Ascetic was observed to cross the river from the opposite bank to Pushkaram or Gospada. The very desire of having an ablution in the sacred stream fortunately brought One

Who is the object of the eternal service of all unalloyed souls. The unbounded mercy that was hidden under the garb of the ascetic was showing unusual aptitude to meet a man of an apparently different caliber possessed of all royal grandeur quite in contravention to conditions of life invited by a sannyasin who deserted all earthly hopes of having any aid from busy sections of mundane meddlers.

This unusual meeting of those two extremes, as would seemingly appear before the public eye, will not reconcile the conflicting thoughts of an ordinary observer. This spot with its most precious transcendental association has at last been recovered from the dungeon of forgetfulness or oblivion by one of their humble servants after the lapse of forty decades. Naturally the present day observers will look forward to ascertain the details regarding what led the public to the preservation of the memory of the said incident. Why was the mendicant busy to meet a man of ruling position and what led the ablest head of the administration to come in close touch with an unknown figure void of all worldly ambition?

The Governor had everything to do with the ascetic who also in his turn was travelling throughout the length and breadth of India in search of the Master and His comrades. Both of them found each other in the state which recalls the shrutimantram of the Mundaka as if dva sapurna sayuja, etc.

Gentle readers! Perchance you may not be able to resist the natural impulse to inquire about the couple. To respond to the call of enquiry, we are furnishing the account which has a historical bearing.

This ascetic was no other than Sri Krishna-Chaitanya, identical with Sri Krishna with His Consort Barshabanavi. The principal object, the observed of all observers, was no other than Rai Ramananda, identical with the serving maid known as Sakhi Vishakha of Braja-Leela. The damsel of Braja came to serve her Lord and Consort under the garb of

exhibiting an easy lucid exposition of the transcendental manifestive phase to the reach of fortunate souls. The Supreme Lord--the Fountainhead of the Predominating Aspect of the Transcendental Region--assumed the phase of a servitor, seeking as if his Lord with all ardor, as well as ready to pick up His old friend, to facilitate an easy access to the solving of an intricate problem of eternal life of felicitous knowledge of the transcendence in phenomena.

The immanence of both made the devotees alone to conceive them by their seeming features of transcendence. Their meeting disclosed facts which were a sealed book to the frailties of human mentality. So the memory of this place would be adequately immortalized by recollecting the greatest boon offered to the search of eternity.

The nativity of our hero is alleged to be Bentpur in the District of Puri where his kinsmen are still traced as Choudhury Pattanayakas. He was descended in the Karan caste, which is a mixed caste of vaishya and sudra as Manava Dharma Shastra would tell us in describing the mixed apashadas. His father's name was Bhavananda Rai, who had four other sons. One of the sons, Gopinath, was employed in the service of the king, but was found guilty of embezzling some amount of the royal treasury which penalized his life by the decision of the prince. King Prataparudra, considering the defaulter a brother of Ramananda, granted mercy in sparing his life; whereas, the Supreme Lord exhibited His diffidence to grant him mercy by His devotee, the King. Another brother of his named Vaninath, used to serve faithfully the Supreme Lord in various ways, such as in conveying mahaprasadam, etc.

Rai Ramananda was in the cadre of the highest service of the realm and he had to act as the Governor of East and West Godavari, being a faithful and trustworthy service-holder of the Emperor of Orissa who had extended his province to the north bank of the river Krishna. Highest reference was given of Sri Ramananda by Vasudeva Sarbabhauma

Bhattacharyya, the then erudite professor of monistic Vedanta or Chinmatravada. His devotional activities together with his writings earned for him the fame of the greatest poet of the time. This trait of character was unequalled as well as his maintenance of ethical views was no less.

The Supreme Lord was hurrying up to meet him in His journey to the South and was very eager to have his unique company of pure highest devotion. Rai Ramananda at the same time also cherished an unknown hope of coming in touch with the all-loving transcendental entity Sri Krishna. So They were united in the tie of love which has a serving aptitude for the one goal--the akhila-rasamrita-murty.

Rai's excellent work, Sri Jagannath-ballava-natakam, was being written with the skill of a reputed rhetorician, and later on this drama attracted the attention of the Supreme Lord in His manifesting devotional rituals. The style is so very simple that a little knowledge of grammar can help the readers of any other languages originated from Sanskrit in following the same.

Since his meeting with the Supreme Lord at Kovvur, Rai Ramananda strictly followed the counsel of his Master. He parted with his exalted position and returning to Puri awaited for the Supreme Lord in order to serve Him as a companion. During his period of retirement from the service of the emperor Rai Ramananda lived at the Jagannath Ballava Garden in the town of Puri where he was busily engaged in the practices of the transcendental services of all those girls whom he considered to be identical with the damsels of Braja.

The blind pedants could not discern his position as a true practical devotee in his swarupa or transcendental absolute position when he sincerely posed as an eternal serving maid of the paraphernalia of the Predominated Transcendental Aspect of the Absolute. The ordinary eyes cannot possibly transcend the worldly phenomena; so their vision is never proselytized by spiritual acquisition. The ordinary brain cannot possibly distinguish between the mundane and the spiritual planes. Their

particular angle of vision cannot convince them of the transcendental plane where no sensuous enjoyment is feasible. The ordinary sight of an empiricist can never be expected to subscribe to para-vidya when their funds are truly lacking in transcendental treasures. He was and is often confused as a man who was indulging in his senses for his enjoyment by lustful anthropomorphists.

But the true position of the heart of our hero was not observed by such people in the true light of a devotee. A true devotee has no other ambition to enjoy the frailties of Nature. He is ever engaged in the service of the Master's comrade without any attempt to have a share in the Lord's acquisition. He has been accepted by the Supreme Lord as His best friend; and, not only as a friend, but as an eternal friend in the company of Sri Krishna and His Consort. It is stated by the biographer of the Supreme Lord that the sweet composition of the songs of Rai Ramananda acted as predominating over the transcendental mentality of the Master. His book formed one of the five that occupied the engagement of the Supreme Lord. He has left some songs in the Malthili language which much attracted the love of his Lord. And these songs are the highest specimens of delineations of transcendental love. His integrity and sincerity were fully substantiated at the occasion of the meeting of Pradyumna Mishra who was asked by the Supreme Lord Sri Krishna-Chaitanya to learn the clue of true devotion from the denizen of the Jagannath Ballava Garden who was fully occupied with the transcendental love of Braja. The Supreme Lord compared his renunciating demeanor with that of the ideal abnegation of the Goswamis Sri Rupa and Sri Sanatana who have shown to the world conduct reaching the acme of deserting platform.

His time can be safely admitted from the eighth decade of the fifteenth century to the succeeding fourth decade of the Christian era. He greatly exerted himself in securing the favor of the Supreme Lord towards the emperor of Orissa who was in territorial possession of Andhra. The King allowed him to remain in the Garden of Jagannath Ballava and granted him suitable pension during his lifetime. He was one of the two constant

companions of the Lord and was the best friend of Damodar Swarup Goswami. He was treated in reverential eye by the proper followings of the Supreme Lord, viz., Sri Raghunath Das Goswami and others. He was also the bosom friend of Sri Rupa and Sri Sanatana.

The servant's story is not complete unless the Master's account is given at least in a brief compass in order to avoid a partial view of correlation of both. So the Master's advent before Ramananda should enlighten the account. In the first place we are to narrate the previous activities of the Supreme Lord who was loved by one and all, by whomsoever He met. But the Lord had a peculiar affinity for our hero. It has been told of the Supreme Lord that He assumed the platform of a world-teacher for the upheaval of the contaminated mentality of the apathetic bound souls who preferred to have a temporal life in the clutches of time and space to accommodate matter.

Worldly persons are no doubt busy with the historicity of the Master and Rai Ramananda, so that they may get hold of the activities of the religious teacher in the cadre of other such instructing preachers. To satisfy their curiosity as well as to help them in their advance towards non-mundane plane the Life of the Supreme Lord may be sketched in the following lines:

Sri Krishna-Chaitanya was born at Sri Mayapur in the District of Nadia comprised in the Province of Bengal in India. Sri Mayapur is situated on the eastern bank of the sacred stream of the Ganges. He was born on the 18th of February in the year 1486 A.D. at the time when there occurred a lunar eclipse in the early evening. In accordance with the custom of the Indo-Aryans the people were seeking after accumulating virtues and expiating their sins on the occasion. They were singing the Name of personal Godhead Vishnu instead of indulging in an abstract idea of Him, void of all nomenclatures.

Sri Krishna-Chaitanya wanted to dispel the erroneous ideas of people who are busy to target the entity of Godhead into an impersonality. To give relief from such doubts Sri Chaitanya's advent into this world has got the inconceivable trace of His parents. His father was known as Jagannath Mishra who migrated from Sylhet in Assam to sacred Nadia, washed by the sanctifying stream, the center of learning at that time but stubbornly averse to Godly associations. Once this place had been the seat of the capital of the kings of Bengal.

His mother Sachi Devi had several daughters born before the advent of the Supreme Lord, who had died in their infancy, and had a son before she could get Sri Chaitanya as her boy. Sri Chaitanya's elder brother renounced the company of his kinsmen by assuming the garb of a sannyasin under the help of Advaita-Acharyya of Shantipur, which is also a town in the District of Nadia. Srivas Pandit was an elderly citizen of Nabadwip, close neighbor of Jagannath Mishra and a, man of devout nature.

The parents of Sri Chaitanya regarded it as a great favor of the Supreme Lord in having Him as the Loving Darling of all their ambition. Sri Chaitanya in His early life had His different Names--Nimai, Gauranga, Vishwambhar, etc. He was found to speak the highest philosophy of the impersonal nature when he was an infant. He inculcated the views of the pantheists in dismissing purity and dirt when He betook Himself to playing with rejected earthen pots in the unclean refuse heap as well as taking earth instead of sweetmeats offered by His mother. The boy heard with rapt attention the admonitions of His mother to the effect that in the manifestive world everything has its propriety and they need not be classed in the same category as the impersonalists view them ignoring the special utility of particular things adaptable as ingredients of the devotees.

In the manifestive transcendence time, space and the entities need not

be confused with the impersonal vague ideas of blank space which is void of all eternal attributes. Though the impersonal conception is derived from the bitter limited experience of the temporal activities and transformations, sensation of miseries, inadequacies and other unsuitable experiences, yet it is a hasty conclusion that summarily rejects the manifestive sight out of its preference for the void of all attributions.

His kinsmen observed many supernatural feats in Him though He was then a mere boy busy with His childish activities. He lost His father in His infancy. But this does not give Him any opportunity of neglecting His studies. His father and maternal grandfather were both professors and men of learning. Within a short time He picked up versatile knowledge along with His training in the Sanskrit language.

He had to accost a learned pandit who was seeking the fame of a "Conqueror" of the then learned men. Though Vishwambhar was handled in a neglecting way by that Champion of learning, the latter was compelled to submit to the learning of the young grammar-pandit. This incident gave Nimai Pandit the highest platform among the erudite scholars of the then center of learning.

Vishwambhar was married in His Early Life, though He was not born in an opulent family. After the demise of His father He wanted to seek for adequate money to maintain His family by His pedagogic activities. So He went to the Eastern parts of Bengal to secure necessary wealth. On his return from the foreign land He found that His Wife was no longer living to enjoy His treasures thus brought from abroad. So He resorted to marrying a second time at the insinuations of His relatives and especially of His mother who required to be looked after by the spouse of her son. The first wife was known by the name of Lakshmipriya and the second was Vishnupriya.

The practice of offering pinda for one's departed father was in vogue and He submitted to such conventional method of the society in taking a journey to Gaya where He met Iswara Puri, a mendicant devotee of the Madhva School. He submitted to the sage who was reputed disciple of the well-known Madhavendra Puri.

This initiation turned the tables for mundane aspirations to the love of All-loving Absolute Krishna. The transcendental operation of initiation gave Him to know that the Transcendental Word Krishna is the fullest entity of the widest comprehension of Godhead. So the exploitations of the grammarians, in wrangling words in the fashion of Panini, with different meanings tended to one goal – Krishna - when the enjoying attitude by mundane senses is withheld. Different words of different languages have got distinctive and contending impressions as between one another. He came to the conclusion that the Absolute has no deviation and He can only be had through directing the aural activity to transcendence and immanence.

This transcendental sound is cogent enough to regulate the receiving instrument of conception of mundane knowledge which has a distinctive feature from the Absolute non-flickering varieties.

He was found to chant the Name of Krishna night and day without any cessation on His return to Nadia. The pupils who used to get their coaching from Nimai Pandit could not any longer avail the opportunity of aggrandizing themselves with the knowledge of Sanskrit grammar, as they found their Teacher was absorbed in the love of Krishna. The pupils approached Nimai Pandit to induce their professor to teach them grammar as before. But Nimai Pandit would not at all submit to the advice of Gangadas, His teacher, to pay His attention to the entreaties of the students of Nadia. He was busy with inculcating the transcendental message to all His friends. Advaita, Srivas and Thakur Haridas, all were expecting Nimai to take up the cause of pure theism by His marked

unusual talents, and by this His conversion Nimai Pandit proved the object of their unending joy and ecstasy. All of them, who had got a theistic tendency, now found in Him their only leader.

The karma-kandins and persons who indulged in jnana-kanda and other denizens of the town stood against the new propaganda of theism headed by Vishwambhar. They could not win over this party by their talents and arguments. They were fully confident of the unusual merits of Sri Chaitanya. So they could not find their way to put a check to the volcanic activities of this band of workers. Finding no other measures for impeding their course they resorted to the Fouzdar (Magistrate) of the town to chastise the new religious party who had become a nuisance and disturbers of their peace by their shouting of the Name of Krishna. The form of the religious propagation of Nimai held that uttering the Name would bring all facilities of serving Krishna even better than worshipping singly which is not annoying to the neighbors and is non-interfering with the whims of the mob.

The non-Hindu community of the town headed by the Mohammedan Kazi commenced to offer opposition in various ways. The personality of Vishwambhar attracted attention of many citizens who organized a very large party to accost the Kazi for his interference in their particular religious activities. This was successful and the propaganda went on with all propriety. Mischievous people were on the look-out for impeding the numerical expansion of the following of Vishwambhar by instigating two naughty turbulent brahmana robbers. The cementing policy and assurances of Nimai proselytized their vicious conduct into religious life, though Nimai's co-workers were roughly handled. The following of Vishwambhar met at the premises of Srivas where they held their religious congregation. Some naughty opponents thought it fit to have some dirty articles placed against the doorway of the house of Srivas to show their indignant attitude. This was also pacified by Vishwambhar taking no steps for putting a stop to such mischievous deeds.

Certain Hindus of henotheistic culture wanted to annoy Sri Chaitanya. On a particular occasion it so happened that a few students of the community approached Nimai Pandit as He was chanting the names of the consorts of Krishna. They were opposed to Krishna-bhakti and were specially averse to revere and offer their services to Krishna-bhaktas, considering themselves to be on a par with them. This caused Sri Krishna Chaitanya to chastise them with a cudgel, this enraged the community of those hostile atheists. The active opponents of the theistic propaganda now made up their minds to disperse the association of the devotees by a series of disturbances. Nimai patiently observed all this and arrived at the conclusion that He would not be in a position to confer a greater boon on His neighbors unless He renounced their society. Those naughty fellows, through their ignorance had observed that Nimai being a co-sharer of their religious community had deviated from the customary course and was proving hostile to their community. So they were resolved to act in the contrary way simply to discourage His religious culture and work of propaganda.

Nimai took due note of the situation and thought that it would be wise to leave them alone in their exploits by assuming Vedic mendicancy which all are accustomed to revere and to which they accord their esteemed adoration. At the closing of His twenty-fifth year He went to Katwa, now a sub-divisional town in the District of Burdwan in Bengal, twenty-four miles from Sri Mayapur, with a few select friends with the object of formally giving up for good the life of a householder. ,

Just after this change He was found to be drawn to Vrindavan where He could meet Krishna and His associates, the only ambition of all true souls who are repelled by the optimistic course of the worldly people. His companions did not allow Him to hasten directly to the locality of Mathura, but diverted Him from His course by a hoax in keeping with His exclusive mood. They managed to conduct Him to Santipur where He had to meet many of His friends of Nadia, who were anxious to have a last sight of Him on the occasion of His departure from their midst, including Sachi Devi and the bhaktas.

On the eve of His departure from Nadia He addressed His wife and mother and all friends to the effect that He was leaving their society in His search for Krishna and the very act would give them a better opportunity of culturing the habit of search after Krishna. The desertion was a boon to all of them and they should part with Him in all goodwill.

From Shantipur He took the track on the east bank of the Ganges, passing through Varahanagar, Calcutta, Atisara, Chattrabhoga and other villages before He entered Orissa. He visited Gopinath at Remuna in the District of Balasore, where His grand-preceptor Madhavendra Puri had the privilege of receiving the special mercy of the Lord Who purloined one of the pots full of preparation of thickened milk and rice boiled in the same which had been offered to Himself by the officiating priest, and presented it to Madhavendra Puri for his use. He went on to Jajpur and visited Sakshi Gopala in Cuttack. He reached Puri by way of Bhuvaneswar.

At Puri Sri Chaitanya met Vasudev Sarbabhauma who was a professor of impersonal Vedantism and many other bhaktas. After the conversion of Sarbabhauma to theism all of them recommended Him to meet Rai Ramananda in His pilgrimage to the South. He was now bent upon strictly adhering to the rules of the life of a recluse and would not even admit the emperor of Orissa to approach Him. Before His meeting with Rai Ramananda He had visited the Shrine of Alalnath at Brahma-giri, Kurmadeva at Kurmachalam near Chicacole in the modern District of Ganjam, where He engaged Himself in preaching Krishna-bhakti.

Spending a few days with Ramananda on Krishna topics Sri Chaitanya in His progress through the South visited Mangalgiri in Guntur, Ahobilam in Karnul and Tirupati in Chittur Districts. He visited almost all the shrines of Tamil country. He had been to Conjiveram, Sri Rangam, Madura, Shiyali, Kumbakonam, Tanjore and saw several shrines in the Tinnevely District

and in the Travancore State where He saw Janardana and Ananta Padmanabha, Adikeshava and Kanya Kumari before He visited Payoshni and the Western-coast shrines.

At Sri Rangam He lived for four months in the house of a Sri vaishnava, who had migrated to that place, named Venkata Bhatta, with whom He had a comparative discussion of the principles of majesty (aishvarya) and mellow attraction (madhurya). It resulted in the conversion of his brother Prabodhananda, a tridandi sannyasin, and his son Gopala

Bhatta who turned out to be one of the six principal disciples at Vrindavan. At Tiruvattar He picked up the Fifth Chapter of Brahma Samhita which bore testimony to the highest excellence of Krishna and His pastimes together with a nice delineation of the diverse conception of the kathenotheists, He visited several places on the Western coast including Shringeri, Udipi, Todri, Gokarna, etc. At Udipi He was misunderstood as a mayavadi sannyasin, i.e., as being a recluse of the impersonal school; but theistic discourses turned the tables against the holders of this wrong view. It was stated by the other side that the procedure of fruitive work would lead to salvation. But He established bhakti to be both the means and the end of all activities, which could not be denied by the successors of the Madhva School. He approved their doctrine that the object of worship and the fountainhead of all different aspects of Vishnu is Krishna, the all-embracing resort of all rasas and who is the presiding deity of the Madhva School.

He went to Kolahpur and visited other places on His way back to Purusottam Kshetra (Puri), including Pandharpur where His elder brother Vishwarupa, known as Swami Sankararanya, left His body on the bank of the river Bhima.

On returning to Puri He met His former comrades of Nadia, including

Thakur Haridas and Damodar Swarup. He rejoined Ramananda Rai and Vasudav Sarvabhauma and His Utkal followers. People from Nadia went to Puri to have a sight of the Supreme Lord Who returned thither after visiting all the shrines of the South, including East and West coast, and after meeting all the then religious heads.

He now showed the people by His acts how to serve Jagadisha in different capacities, e.g., drawing the Cars with samkirtan in congregations. He was now pleased to grant His permission to see Him first to the son of the emperor and later on to the emperor himself. People from Nadia used to meet Him every year during the time of the Car Festival and enjoyed His Presence by strictly following the dictates of religion of love. Sri Krishna-Chaitanya had always a detestation for mayavada--that phase of pantheism in which the eternal service is practically denied and pedantic aspersions are found to predominate over the aspects of transcendental manifestive Truth.

The Supreme Lord was not permitted by His devotees to proceed to Vrindavan, lest He would not return. The Lord acceded to the apprehension in curbing His Journey from Malda (Old Gauda), a northern district of the same name in Bengal, as per counsels of His admirers. He was determined to proceed to Vrindavan and this time He would accept only one companion for His journey to the Northwestern province, through wild regions of forests. After crossing over the forest tracks and meeting the ferocious animals by associating Himself with them by chanting the transcendental Names He reached Benares and met some two or three admirers there before, He would journey for Allahabad where He met Sri Rupa Goswami, one of the twin stars of the administration of Bengal who He taught all about bhakti--or the procedure how to secure Krishna prema or the final goal of all ambitions. From Allahabad He visited all the vicinities of Vrindavan where Krishna enacted His bhoutma lila, to enlighten those freed souls who were entitled to have the same and stayed there for some months. He retraced His footsteps to Allahabad via Soron after chalking out the Ganges route to meet Sanatan Goswami who had escaped from the prison of the then King of Bengal as

the King could not spare Sanatana for his services for religious purposes. At Benaras He taught Sanatana all about the sambandha jnanam (i.e., the transcendental relation of the eternal manifestations).

He paid a short visit to Kurukshetra and some other places which are not specifically noted in His biography, before He again returned to Puri. He took vigorous measures in respect of His followings who were found to go astray from His instructions, e.g., the renegade pseudo-Haridas and others.

From His thirty-seventh year to the close of His lila He did not permit outsiders to perturb Him in His spiritual activities except that His intimate followings had the privilege of serving Him in his Krishha-loving aptitude. Sometimes people observed Him in full entheasmic trance. Sometimes He was observed to run into the waters of the Bay considering its brine to be the spiritual water of the Yamuna where Krishna used to play. In all his Spiritual Activities the followers have learnt that separation of the consort is estimated as helping the spiritual culture and not the enjoying association of the Absolute which cannot make any progress.

His Disappearance is traced to His amalgamation with Gopinath at Tota in Puri. Some are of opinion that He merged into Jagadisha at the Gundicha in Sundarachal. Foolish and unscrupulous men have surmised that His body was mixed in waters of the Bay, but in that case the dashing wave might have returned Him to the shore. There are different spurious stories which go to show that His disappearance came about by the activities of His opponents. But the devotees are confident of His eternal and spiritual body being inseparable from the owner as He is not to be estimated in the light of an incarnation or conditioned soul like the preacher who has to pay the debt to Nature.

In fact He was identical with the All-love having no mundane reference to

signify His entity in particular time and space, though He did not show to delude the, apathetic and rupturous views of a non-loving caliber. This is a short narrative of the Supreme Lord and Rai Ramananda as gauged by mundane spectators known as hagiolaters who search about the accounts of heroes.

CHAPTER II THE LORD AND HIS BELOVED

(Viewed by Devotees)

We have surveyed in the last Chapter the seeming conception of worldly people about Rai Ramanana. Now we are to enlighten those who are interested in the esoteric aspect of the devotee. Savants of the spiritual manifestations do not corroborate the view of the ordinary observer of mundane phenomena. Conception is carried both in worldly phenomena as well as in transcendental manifestive aspects. A stricter caution may not be neglected in distinguishing the two different planes so as to rescue the true view from confusion.

Rai Ramananda was far from subscribing to the conception of a pantheist. From what 'he had disclosed about the solution of the manifestive absolute before Sri Krishna-Chaitanya, we come to know that Krishna is the fountainhead of all sounds, all aspects of sight, the creator of spritual and mundane representations, the very center of all sensuous activities and the object of all manifestive phenomena. He is the efficient and material cause of every manifestation and all noumena. Infinite potencies are inherent in Him, and the potencies are set to work by being emanated from the sole fountainhead. He is the essence and flavor of all smelling activity of an enjoyer. He is the relishing and tasteful entity of all active workers who are a part and parcel of the substratum and delegated powers.

The sentient creation is nothing but a wrapper of the transcendental senses inherent in all spiritual atoms known as jivas. They are adaptable as predominated agents of the predominating aspect of Krishna. Krishna is Himself svayam-rupa; and other representative aspects of the eternal

fountainhead are His non-distinctive manifestations to help the atomic spiritual parts of His borderland potency, viz., the jivas.

There are five stages which are known as acme of spontaneous function towards the All-love by His loving agents. So we do not find any ritualistic performance by Ramananda, though there was the seeming feature of ablution in the waters of the Godavari accompanied by his karmi councilors who were busy in trying to induce him to submit to the conventional customs of the fruit-seekers. His conversations with the Supreme Lord disclose the fact of his far-off situation from the conception of the ritualists or the designs of the intellectual pedants prone to suicidal commission. The disclosure of the transcendental manifestation through the lips of an eternal devotee was calculated by the following of Sri Krishna-Chaitanya as the pioneer publication of the transcendental Truth in various aspect. So the messenger should not be misunderstood by scrutinizing merely his outward appearance. A devotee is never recognized by his seeming feature and condition.

The Supreme Lord has taught us by His self-composed verse which runs thus –

naham vipro na ca nara-patir napi vaisyo na sudro

naham varni na ca grha-patir no vana-stho yatir va

kintu prodyan nikhila-paramananda-purnamrtabdher

gopi-bhartuh pada-kamalayor dasa-dasanudasah

"I am not a brahmana, nor a ksatriya, nor a vaishya, nor a sudra; neither am I a brahmacari, a grihasta, nor a vanaprasta or sannyasi, but I am the eternal servant of the servant of the servant of the brilliant, unlimited, most blissful, complete emporium of nectar Who is the maintainer of the gopies."

The Supreme Teacher posed Himself as the audience of the speaker of transcendental Truth as a mere Inquirer. The adamantine mentality could not easily submit to the enlightenment by the eternal observer in his delineation of the eternal fact. An unalloyed observation of the soul should not be contaminated in any way to determine himself as being identical with the over-soul. But an eternal servitor views every manifestation either to be identical with the object of his devotion or traces the eternal relationship with the Same.

The outward meeting of Sri Chaitanya with Ramananda was quite deceptive to the ordinary spectator, specially the dissimilar combination of the two, one being a mendicant and the other showing affinity for worldly affairs. Unless the spectator is familiar with the keen insight to penetrate into the hearts of both of them he is not expected to discern the actual subjectivity and their real goal. If the spectator is educated in the line of the salvationists he would necessarily be confused in ascertaining the compatibility of the two. In his estimation the Mendicant should not show such affinity for a man in power busy with his pompous attempts in securing popularity and must fall as a true religious man. Ramananda was far from the misleading conceptions of an enjoying impersonalist.

The devotees are not properly seen by the non-devotees who have got a wrong education and misconception. A non-devotee often thinks himself quite conversant with all the phases of mundane existence. And this unreliable confidence in himself makes him a pedant and deaf to the inculcation of a devotee's temper. So he cannot participate in the same

view with a devotee. The difference between a devotee and the following of the school of impersonalists can be traced by the bifurcate view of the former's particularizing the interest of self with that of the hazy consideration of apparently contending impressions of the latter. The devotee is busy with his person and the Personality of the Absolute. Whereas an impersonalist is found to concentrate his conflicting conceptions to an imaginary unity. His synthetic method in many cases leads him to despair.

Ramananda had one object in view and his object was Krishna and His services in order to please Him. The ordinary eye will consider him to run after different aims to satisfy his senses; but he had only one determination to fulfil. Sri Krishna-Chaitanya and His following could determine his true position as true devotee, meant for his eternal services to Krishna.

"Though Krishna was observed by the wrestlers as the best champion like the thunder, by the people as the king of men, by the ladies as the attracting center of love, by the cowherds as their near Relative, by the wrong-doing chieftains as their chastiser, by the parents as their Only Child, by the Emperor (Kamsa) of Bhoja as Destruction Incarnate, by the fools as Infinity, by the Yogins as the Final Object and by the Brishnis as their Guardians, the eternal brothers (Baladev and Krishna) went up to the platform of Kamsa." Though Krishna was observed as Matsya, Kurma, Varaha, Nrisimha, Vamana, Three Ramas, Buddha and Kalki, and Brahma, Vishnu and Maheshvara, and Vasudeva, Samkarshana, Pradyumna and Anirudha, Manvantaravatara, Yugavatara, Aveshavatara, and as the Instructor or Leader, and Brahman and Paramatman by different sights, He was the only object of devotion of Ramananda as consort. When the Absolute is consort, the reciprocal situation of the servitor can easily be ascertained as serving-maid. When that object is eternally served by the serving maid who has just attained towards Him, her eternal age has no variation in the rolling round of time. The very beauty and color of the eternal server is exactly dove-tailing the purpose of the object and the eternal garments of the pair are no longer shut off

before the following of Ramananda.

The eternal Name, Form, Color, Abode, Garments, Mentality, Ingredients of service and everything connected therewith are visible to a true devotee who aspires to have a similar situation to follow his or her leader. A hazy sight will determine him in the historicity of heroes, locate him in a particular province, and give him as the holder of a particular situation. But a devotee has little to be taught in these lines to ascertain the absolute whereabouts of Ramananda. A devotee knows Ramananda's grove on the bank of the Spiritual Stream Yamuna and particular helpful Pastimes rendered to Krishna.

CHAPTER III THEIR CONVERSATION

(For the Beginners)

The ritualists were amazed to find that the mendicant, coming in contact with a person of lower cast though of high position, showed such ardent love which was not usual. The Supreme Lord thanked His fortune and went on to say that He was cherishing an extraordinary desire to meet him ever since his transcendental serving mood had been spoken to Him by the erudite scholar Sarvabhouma. In response to the mendicant's queries, Ramananda told him that his revered Sarvabhouma has confidence in him and his well-wishing has made him fortunate to have His presence, and shouted "I am an unseeable, untouchable, so quite unworthy of You; but it is the unprecedented mercy of Sarvabhouma that has posed You to extend Your love to an unworthy object like me. I am a slave of my worldly master, whereas You are exhibiting Your lording potency of the fountainhead. You are debarred by the injunctions of the Vedas to see me and to touch me and enjoined to despise me, which You have ignored, as You are kindly bent upon extending Your Mercy to me which is not approved by the society of cultured people. But I see, You do not care for these. I am quite worthy of having Your favor as Your wonted generosity found to heave me up and this has caused You to inquire about me and brought You here. I am accompanied by tens of hundreds of brahmanas who are all observed now showing their melted mentality and are found to chant the Name of Hari. A mortal being can never be expected to display such symptoms of Godhead."

Sri Chaitanya, overjoyed by the talk of Ramananda, addressed him as the best of the generous hearted highest class of devotees. "The conversion to mellowness of the hearts of your dependents is due to your devotional activity alone. I Myself, an illusionist and mendicant, am proselytised as a devotee by your touch. Sarvabhouma, knowing full well My adamantine mentality, has entreated you to rectify Me and to soften My Heart."

Ramananda said to Mahaprabhu, seeing Him invited to dine at the house of a brahmana and His strong desire to meet him again in connection with Krishna-topics, "I am not satisfied with Your mere sight but want to be regulated by Your transcendental words! I should require to cleanse my heart by Your divine association for a week or so." Though the two eternal friends had no desire to part with each other still they were compelled to detach themselves with a view to meet again towards the evening.

When they met again in the evening, the dialogue on Krishna-topics went on. The Lord inquired, "Kindly cite the verse that deals with the goal of our activities." Ramananda answered by citing the verse of Vishnu Purana, "Service to Vishnu is rendered by performing the respective duties of an individual. Vishnu is pleased by the actual following of ritualistic duties by a person of his particular status and of his particular condition in the four-fold classification of society. Without sticking to the duties of one's respective occupation and condition, there is no other way to please Vishnu."

In Reply to Ramananda's statement the Lord did not admit his proposition, but told him to make further progress in elucidating the topic more vividly. "The seeming sights of mundane representations are not in conformity with the actual demonstration of things. The ritualistic performances are but exoteric attempts in which the esoteric phase is simply ignored.

Having been discouraged in his voluntary citing of the beginner's direction, Ramananda added that people would be profited by surrendering the fruitive results of their performances to Krishna and that this would serve the purpose of all our actions. He quoted a verse from the Bhagavad Gita which was told to Arjuna by his Preceptor Krishna, "Surrender every thing to Me as to whatever you want to do, whatever you want to eat, whatever you want to offer Me in your ritualistic

performances, whatever you are to bestow to others and whatever privations you want to practice."

A man of fruitive actions always tends to work for himself and to monopolize the fruits of his deeds depriving all others for his own personal gain. If these actions are done with a mundane reference, the position of the self is not truly determined as it has reference to the exoteric plane only. The mentality is likely to change its direction if this has reference to a witness.

With regard to this, the Lord said that a simple witness in the shape of Vishnu would not do, as this has a mundane relativity. So the object of offering has also mundane relativity. The offerer has his location in mundane relativity and in mundane perishable temporal activities and cannot possibly claim to serve the eternal all-blissful knowledge Vishnu. The human scope is restricted more to limited ethical considerations, whereas the Conception of the Full need not be restricted in that line; so this is but an exoteric enterprise. He wanted him to elucidate the matter further.

Ramananda again taking up the thread said that the sojourner of Theism should leave off his mundane affinity and this will bring the desired result. He culled a sloka from the eleventh and another from the first canto of the Bhagavatam in order to amend his views to have a higher platform in his discourse: Krishna said, "He has attained the highest level who can sever his connection from worldly virtue and sin as dictated by Me to ameliorate his activity in order to serve Me." Again in the Gita, Krishna said to Arjuna, "I call upon you to rely on Me leaving aside all sorts of virtuous activities, even so you will be relieved from the effects of sin and will not have to repent for doing so."

Persons who engage themselves in endeavors for their own gain,

Ramananda classified into three division, viz., (1) enjoyment by not interfering with others will lead one to serve the Personality of Godhead indirectly; (2) surrendering all the fruits of our deeds to the Personality of Godhead; (3) attempting to serve Krishna leaving aside whatever is detrimental or lucrative to us without seeking for any other advantage from any other quarters.

The first has no mention of service but an acknowledgement of the Personality of Godhead. The second has got reference to the service of Godhead along with our deeds and needs, i.e., mixed-up service. And the third is the preference of the service without making any attempt of mixing that with mundane phenomena. In these three the worker or non-worker has direct or indirect reference as recipient. So the reference of the temporal plane is an associated factor, the question of eternity being ignored. But as the Personality of Godhead is not rightly determined, unalloyed karma with esoteric reference has got some propriety.

The Lord now asked him to leave off the exoteric side and urged for a better level of the approaching entity for higher desirability. Ramananda went on to say that devotion should be attended not with a blind eye but with an esoteric reference of knowledge of the unadulterated. In support of his statement he culled a sloka from the eighteenth chapter of the Gita, "When a person is set free from limited entities, he is found to be in an undisturbed mood where no want is felt, neither any passionate desire to aggrandize himself; in that case he sees equality in the phenomenal world and thereby avails the opportunity of higher standard of devotion. This has also a relative position of negation of the internal perishable phenomena along with a comparative situation of disturbance and peace. This has a tincture of devotion mixed up with the esoteric reference of phenomena.

So the Lord was observed to tell him again to go on with pointing out a higher phase, deciding this also to be an outward demonstration of devotion. Along with the direction of the Lord, Ramananda went on to add that devotion which is free from all sorts of esoteric knowledge is

considered as a very high form of devotion; and, in establishing such unalloyed devotion, he cited a passage from the fourteenth chapter of the Tenth Skandha of the Bhagavatam: "Empiric knowledge should be thoroughly rejected considering its ephemeral result, and specially as the Whole Truth can never be had by such attempt in our phenomenal scope. We should follow by the three mediums of body, mind and tongue, and audience whatever is passed from the lips of an expert in devotion concerning the transcendental narratives, whatever be our position. The unchallenging mood in exercising our aural receiver permits us to cross over the insurmountable altitude of ignorance by practicing a submissive attitude." Of all these five progressive references of the desirability of approaching and serving the Personality of God head the Lord admitted the non-empiric fifth assertion which is free from all sorts of foreign conception mixed up with the activity of animation. The above conversation has been summed up when the Lord spoke about Bhakti to Sri Rupa Goswami at Allahabad. These different stages tend to award dharma, artha, kama and moksha which are not considered covetable of the unalloyed soul who has the innate quality of eternity, knowledge and bliss combined. By undertaking all irregular attempts we are frustrated to have a virtuous and felicitous life as the infant conception of religion has given temperaments to men of religious temper. They were denied to have the full view of unadulterated love to the Absolute as the essential eternal quality of the soul. The wrong conglomeration of our erroneous support with the true function of the unalloyed soul is not preferable in judging the comparative merits of alloyed devotion. People are often dazzled with the light of virtue and morality, when they consider the desirability of their activity in having sensuous enjoyments as altruists by their predilective mood. The consideration of the highest benefit would lead them to hesitate in regard to the adoption of elevating or setting themselves free from the disturbed atmosphere. The fruitive results are but temporal allurements; whereas desertion of the same by dispelling all ignorance due to phenomena was considered to be efficacious in dismissing the temporal manifestations. So the Lord gave His final decision of attaining unalloyed devotion by the method of driving out all passionate mixture of the active workers as well as passive indolent meditators. Determination of self should not be fixed in any of the conception of physical or astral entity, and the object of devotion should not be restricted in any exoteric or esoteric phenomena. The uniting tie between the lover and the loved should in no case be a temporal one, a

blind one and an interrupted one. Transcendental love is full manifestation of ecstatic expansion void of all discrepancies and deformities of the mundane phenomena. We will be simply bewitched by following the two temptations of phantasmagoria which will ever deprive us from having a peep into the only function of blissful devotional knowledge. The price offered to us in loving devotion has no comparison with the feeble and dying results of karma and jnanam which, when compared with bhakti, will prove their futility and worthlessness if their respective intensity or magnitude is brought before us. The erroneous determination of our self has gained for us the two degraded attracting tracks which puzzle us in the true selection. So the Lord wanted from the devotee that he should boldly speak out the Truth for the guidance of the true inquirers.

CHAPTER IV THEIR CONVERSATION

(For the Advanced)

The enlightening hymns of Chandyogya have impressed us that he who can surpass all conceptions of limitation knowing the indestructible Personality of the Absolute, is alone not a kripana but is a brahmana. So the Supreme Lord asked Ramananda to explain his knowledge of transcendence in order to shake off the popular crippled view of ascertaining him by the outward phase. We have surveyed the different aspects of knowledge that are commonly known to people who draw their decision out of their present knowledge derived through the medium of senses.

The comparative merits of pious seekers of virtue against the fallen creatures who have entangled themselves in sinful acts, have been delineated as the stepping-stone of the staircase of Religion. The second step is known as maintainer of the neutrality of virtue and sin, practitioner of the neutral phase of distinctive temporal specification in dismissal of manifestation, and finally the rejector of the three aspects of observer, observation and observed against the enjoying mood of the religionist. The third step inculcates the process of devotion as the medium free from the indirect method of negation of temporary phenomena. Then comes the fourth step where the ambitious fruits targeted by elevationists and salvationists are not traceable. The supreme teacher admits the claim of loving devotion against the non-loving substratum of clouded and unclouded gains which are in other words rupturous and void of love. We deal here with the different perspective phases of devotional love which has very little to do with the synthetic situation of the numerous shareholders.

The object of devotion has no co-sharer to dissuade the ambition of a true targetor. The unalloyed free soul has an innate volcanic activity known as love for the one object and he is never to be expected to pick up anything for his own which would rouse up jealousy of birds of the same feather, but to achieve the only success of vesting all interests from their contending activities to the one. This one is not to be supposed to discourage any loved with his particular phase of loving service.

To determine the object of eternal love by the eternal true servitor, no foreign element is to be tentatively introduced to have a distraction from the Absolute Truth. Love may be effected in the five successively different stages by the lover to the loved. The very embodiment of love has the sole entity of inviting the eternal loved through their five different rasis innate in them. Whenever love is attempted from a lower level it has a necessary tinge of reverence. Love is the principal entity of uniting tie between the two. In mundane phenomena love is described as ephemeral and non-eternal. But when the lover and the loved are both eternally reciprocated, such love is not to be confused with our present experience of denominating the mundane love. The subtle gaseous form, when condensed, is liquefied in the language of the scientist, and the liquid in its turn is solidified in the gradual development. From transcendental non-relativity love is traced to change its subtle form, taking the shape of unalloyed loving service to loving friendship and then to confidential loving friendship. The love becomes purer to concentrate itself to the filial object and reaches the acme in the object of consort. The tone is not changed, but the magnitude of service is augmented gradually step by step.

Ramananda, in describing the loving nature of devotion, cited a verse composed by him which showed the gradual increase of felicity in things which are eatable and drinkable as per the degree and quantity of hunger and thirst. This has analogy to adding more sauce to our serving mood of true love, which brings more enthusiasm. Ramananda went on to cite another verse which was also his composition which purported to disclose the fact that no luck arising out of our action could be compared

with the intense aptitude for having a service to Krishna and this is the exchanged value to secure in return for the ripe and soft relishing quality of Krishna's devotion and this should be secured at all costs when it could be had. Such a disposition is incomparable, with earned fortunes. This is spoken of as the base of prema bhakti.

To this the Supreme Lord expressed His approval and asked him to elucidate further. Service with loving temper has got a conspicuous aspect as distinct from the mere base. In this world we invite the objects to serve us and we have got the inner inclination of approving the adaptability of being served by others, as we are quite unaccustomed to find out the All-love Who has concealed Himself from us through our sensuous activities. So Rama-nanda exhibited the glaring phase of the pure service to the Personality of Godhead as the most interesting piece of function of the soul. The soul, now lying in a dormant condition, has delegated powers to the mind in order to take over the charge of meddling with the external world by lording it over mundane entities. But the temporal activity can have the permanent function if the loving aptitude is directed towards the All-love Who is the one without a second. As regards the aspects they will be dealt later on along with our ameliorating functions of love. To support his statement Ramananda culled a passage of the Bhagavatam (9 Sk., 16 ch., 16 sl.) together with a passage from the hymns of Yamunacharya, "Nothing remains unavailable by the servitors who are purified by the aural reception of the transcendental Name of the very entity of holiness". Alavandar, in his lyrics, gave vent to the expression, "When will that day come when I will be in a position to please my Master, considering myself as an eternal unswerving slave, having dispelled all sorts of designs by my innate serving mood constantly."

The Supreme Lord approved this version of unalloyed service and solicited further progressive elucidation. Ramananda's answer was to target confidential service of a friend to the Personality of Godhead being the highest aim of a devotee. The question of neutrality is amplified in concerning the integral Absolute and the infinitesimal potency in the

same line. In support of his statement Ramananda culled a passage from the tenth skanda of the Bhagavatam (12th Chapter, 11th sloka) which ran to disclose the comparative situation of the unexpected fortune that is received by the cowherd-friends of Krishna which have excelled that of the ordinary servitors of the Absolute, the object of the transcendental ecstatic felicity realized by the sojourners of the tract of knowledge.

The Supreme Lord was showing His approval when He heard of the confidential loving service superior to menial service from the lips of Ramananda. When the normal stage is exceeded it was approved not with toleration but with definite and positive assertion. But the Supreme Lord said, "The confidential service is no doubt better than that of the service-holders. Still you are to advance a little more."

So Ramananda had to disclose his heart more in speaking out filial love for Krishna which is higher and nobler than the confidential friendship. To bear testimony to his assertion he culled two more verses from the tenth chapter of the tenth skandha of the Bhagavatam, "The glory achieved by the parents in serving the Absolute Personality of Godhead exhibited the two incidents of comparative fortune of the parents. What led Nanda and Yasoda to avail the parental situation of the Son-God and what were the incidents that led the unparalleled luck of Yasoda which induced the Son-God to suck her breast ?" The fortune that was not available to the four-faced Brahma, five-faced Siva, the generating and the destroying entity of the Absolute, nor to His spouse Laksmi who has such unprecedented favor, was received by the milkmaid from the dispenser of liberation. The Supreme Lord approved this disclosure with great sympathy, but asked him to proceed to the climax.

Ramananda in response to His query gave out that love of consort predominates over all other aspects of devotion. He recited two verses from the tenth skandha of the Bhagavatam to espouse the glorious position of the milkmaids who are the best of His subservients.

The love for the consort excels that of all loving servitors or loving parents. The intensity of affinity is the greatest in the milk-maids serving their consort. The ecstatic displays that are found in ladies towards their husbands, the temporal but incessant love of the goddesses towards their gods, the strongest affinity of the Laksmis towards Narayana, cannot be compared with the ecstatic enthusiasm that was enjoyed by the milk-maids at the rasa pastime when every one of them were in the arms of each of variegated entities of Krishna. When the Gopis were cast into the depths of the ocean of grief by the conspicuous absence of Sri Krishna, He suddenly appeared before them with a smiling face wearing the yellow apparel, garlanded with flowers. His beautiful appearance was so overwhelmingly attractive that the most sublime beauty completely vanquished the very entity of aesthetic culture.

The combination of hasya, adbhuta, karuna rasas added to the delicious taste of madhurya which could not be compared with any other representation of the kind. There are various means by which the services of Krishna are attained and these variegated aspects can be judged with their respective merits. A servitor is to select, by his predilection, the acme of the function of his soul. But there is a distinctive reference of comparative study if we are not guided by a definite principle. A comparative scrutinization would certainly give us to know the additional qualities, as we find in examining ether, etc., augmented by successive additional attributes and reach the climax with the association of the five in the solid representation. The Personality of Godhead can only be had to accept our unalloyed loving service through love alone and not by reverential procedure. Sri Krishna being the very fountain-head of all resorts of rasa, He is ever prepared to welcome every servitor whoever he and whatever his serving procedure may be.

But if the object is distorted like our confusing Jehovah with Moloch and Moloch with Jehovah, we would certainly miss the kindly feelings of Krishna. This conception in scrutinizing ourselves will lead us astray from

the true object. Our eternal functions and activities if misdirected will give us troubles and if we fail to determine Krishna, Who is the sole attractor of the unalloyed entities of souls, we will certainly miss to apprehend the process inculcated by Ramananda. Our wrong and erroneous promulgation will never enable us to get the best benefit that can be had by us if we fail to single out loving tenor to Krishna against Dharma, artha, kama and moksha, i.e., by our limited propensity of limited elevation and salvation.

Ramananda, being further asked to subjoin the fullest reciprocity of madhurya rasa, advanced to delineate the counter reciprocal moiety of the whole by fixing the object in Sri Radhika. The highest step of devotion is displayed to serve the Pair and to utilize the full independence of the servitor to espouse the cause of the predominating aspect of the counter-whole by associating oneself in Her company. Ramananda was found to describe the situation of the paraphernalia and the transcendental duties congenial to confidential service of attending maids of Sri Radhika which completed the full narration of the manifestive position of amorous Pair.

CHAPTER V CONCLUSION

In analyzing the narrative we find that we have got an outward structure apart from the physical sight of things. We have got an inner situation as distinguished from the entire contemplative plane where meditating entities are set apart from us. A holder of the physical body and owner of the contemplating spirit has got a common fountainhead Who or Which is asserted as the owner of the two possessions and this proprietor forms a part of the spiritual whole with Whom the person is fully associated. The spiritual tie between the integral spirit and fractions is roughly known as "meditation". This meditation at the very sight proves to have reference to physical and mental qualities. Both these qualities are shiftable. So the factor of time puts them into different chambers and this location is restricted to finitudinal inadequacies. If the spirit is detached from the integer, the associating tie will be observed to be "meditation"; so the purport of meditation is hampered by the contamination of a different element which is known as matter, being opposite to the spiritual bearing. The very preamble of the Bhagavata school goes to signify the function of the spirit as meditation. If this is judged in the ordinary eye we get the position of the "doer" isolated and joined by a tie or deed which is an instrumental. When love acts as medium between All-love and Love, all the different aspects of bhakti are included in the word dhyanam, or meditation in worldly language. The unalloyed entity will dispel all foreign matters that are included as attributes to suit the relativity of an enjoyer and an enjoyed. The pure unadulterated spiritual attempt of an unalloyed spirit should in no case be confused with the temporal association of material phenomena whether gross or subtle.

Ramananda belonged to the Bhagavata school, so all his activities were pure and instructive, if they were properly followed. The word "following" should not be confused with inadequate or improper relativities of our enjoying mood, which are but defective. The seeming features of things should not predominate over our weak reasonings. If we indulge in such feeble criticism, we would fail to have the full conception of the object of

meditation. The object has been described as "Krishna" or 'Shyama", "Blue Black" or "Dark" i.e. void of all material colors. The hasty sight will deter us to espy the accurate conception. Our bitter experience of relativity will tell us to having the upper hand to get rid of the inadequacy and will instigate our common sense to claim identity with the Whole instead of having firm determination to stick to our real position. In order to get rid of posing as an integer, which is but a tentative adumbration of depriving ourselves from the absolute position, Krishna's mercy was fully displayed in Ramananda; so he was constantly busy with the greatest perfection of eternal blissful knowledge. His entity has been analyzed by his deeds as thoroughly associated with the unalloyed spiritual manifestations. Though his deeds are not approved by the enjoying mood of observers, still a keen penetration and longer sight would surely help the people to learn the Absolute Truth from his pastimes. The Supreme Lord sent Pradyumna Mishra, a brahmana, to pick up some instructions so as to lead him to perfection. The learner was confused to see Ramananda busy with the serving of dancing girls, paying no attention to him. The seeming features did not attract him to accurately observe the divine spiritual deeds of the host. The Supreme Lord gave him to understand to have patience to penetrate into the Real Absolute for which every soul is meant to equip himself for the eternal and transcendental journey.

Ramananda's trait of character is painted by the Supreme Lord in equality with Sri Rupa and Sri Sanatana who played the part of model ascetics. Ramananda had no affinity of enjoying the world, but he was always on the look-out of rendering service to Sri Krishna by inducing the serving-maids for unalloyed amorous purposes pertaining to the eternal pastimes. Silly observations are often found to misunderstand the whole thing, and they are observed to take the lowest level of non-ethical principles.

Ramananda's Maithili song has disclosed startling pastimes which are hardly to come under the rationalistic scope of mundane thinkers. And this was fully participated in by the Supreme Lord in the company of His

intimate friends. His own verse, "Pida bhirna vakala kuta katubhih" is the full parade of speedy loving service to Krishna, instead of submitting to passionate feats.

The Supreme Lord has furnished the highest testimonial of the spiritual life in Ramananda. The Supreme Lord spent His last days in the close companionship of this picked-up serving temper with His most confidential associates. His drama served as one of the constant companions of the Supreme Lord's direct service to Krishna. Ramananda was recognized as one of the four mukta purushas of the time of the Supreme Lord and he was certified to be the only friend who had no equal among the bhaktas He met in the South. But alas! the highest platform of a devotee is often taken advantage of by the greatest scoundrels and thereby the providential will is carried fully by preventing intelligent pedants to have access to the eternal world where knowledge is infinity and bliss is incessant. He was not an instructor to teach merely how to get rid of this mundane bondage but served as an advance-guide of eternally unfettered liberated souls in their incessant unalloyed service of the pastimes of Krishna, who have no connection with or reference to the mundane relative service of the Lord.

The Ramanada Samvad Of Sri Chaitanya Charitamrita

By Krsnadas Kaviraj Goswami

1. Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, also known as Gauranga, is the reservoir of all conclusive knowledge in devotional service. He empowered Sri Ramananda Rai, who may be likened to a cloud of devotional service. This cloud was filled with the conclusive purports of

devotional service and was empowered by the ocean to spread this water over the sea. Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu himself was the ocean of knowledge of pure devotional service.

2. All glories to Lord Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu! All glories to Lord Nityananda Prabhu! All glories to Advaita Acarya! And all glories to all the devotees of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu!

3. According to His previous program, Lord Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu went forward on His tour and after some days arrived at the place of pilgrimage known as Jiyad-nrsimha.

4. After seeing the Deity Lord Nrsimha in the temple, Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu offered His respectful obeisances by falling flat. Then in ecstatic love, He performed various dances, chanted and offered prayers.

5. "All glories to Nrsimhadeva! All glories to Nrsimhadeva, who is the Lord of Prahlada Maharaja and, like the honeybee, is always engaged in beholding the lotus like face of the goddess of fortune."

6. "Although very ferocious, the lioness is very kind to her cubs. Similarly, although very ferocious to nondevotees like Hiranyakasipu, Lord Nrsimhadeva is very, very soft and kind to devotees like Prahlada Maharaja."

7. In this way Lord Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu recited different verses from the sastra. The priest of Lord Nrsimhadeva then brought garlands and the remnants of the Lord's food and offered them to Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu.

8. As usual, a brahmana offered Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu an invitation. The Lord passed the night in the temple and then commenced His tour again.

9. The next morning in the great ecstasy of love, Lord Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu started on His tour with no knowledge of the proper direction, and He continued all day and night.

10. As previously, Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu converted to Vaisnavism

many people He met on the road. After some days, the Lord reached the banks of the river Godavari.

11. When He saw the river Godavari, the Lord remembered the river Yamuna, and when He saw the forest on the banks of the river, He remembered Sri Vrndavan- dhama.

12. After performing His usual chanting and dancing for some time in this forest, the Lord crossed the river and took His bath on the bank.

13. after bathing in the river, the Lord walked a little distance from the bathing place and engaged in chanting the holy name of Krsna.

14. At that time, accompanied by the sounds of music, Ramananda Rai came there mounted on a palanquin to take his bath.

15. Many brahmanas following Vedic principles, accompanied Ramananda Rai. According to the Vedic rituals, Ramananda Rai took his bath and offered oblations to his forefathers.

16. Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu could understand that the person who had come to bath in the river was Ramananda Rai. The Lord wanted so much to meet him that

His mind immediately began running after him.

17. Although Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu was running after him mentally, He patiently remained sitting. Ramananda Rai, seeing the wonderful sannyasi, then came to see Him.

18. Srila Ramananda Rai then saw Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu as brilliant as a hundred suns. The Lord was covered by a saffron garment. He was large in body and very strongly built, and His eyes were like lotus petals.

19. When Ramananda Rai saw the wonderful sannyasi, he was struck with wonder. He went to Him and immediately offered his respectful obeisances, falling down flat like a rod.

20. The Lord stood up and asked Ramananda Rai to arise and chant the

holy name of Krsna. Indeed, Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu was very eager to embrace him.

21. Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu then inquired whether he was Ramananda Rai, and he replied, "Yes, I am Your very low servant, and I belong to the sudra community."

22. Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu then embraced Sri Ramananda Rai very firmly. Indeed, both the master and the servant almost lost consciousness due to ecstatic love.

23. Their natural love for one another was awakened in them both, and they both embraced and fell down on the ground.

24. When they embraced one another, ecstatic symptoms-paralysis, perspiration, tears, shivering, palpitations and paleness-appeared. The word "Krsna" came from their mouths falteringly.

25. When the stereotyped, ritualistic brahmanas who were following the Vedic principles saw this ecstatic manifestation of love, they were struck with wonder.

All these brahmanas began to reflect as follows.

26. These brahmanas began to think, "We can see that this sannyasi has a luster like the effulgence of Brahman, but how is it He is crying upon embracing a sudra, a member of the fourth caste in the social order?"

27. They thought, "This Ramananda Rai is the Governor of Madras, a highly learned and grave person, a maha-pandita, but upon touching this sannyasi he has become restless like a madman."

28. While the brahmanas were thinking in this way about the activities of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu and Ramananda Rai, Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu saw the brahmanas and restrained His transcendental emotions.

29. When they regained their sanity, they both sat down, and Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu began to smile and speak as follows.
30. "Sarvabhauma Bhattacharya has spoken of your good qualities, and he has made a great endeavor to convince Me to meet you.
31. "Indeed, I have come here just to meet you. It is very good that even without making an effort I have gotten your interview here".
32. Ramananda Rai replied, "Sarvabhauma Bhattacharya thinks of me as his servant. Even in my absence he is very careful to do me good.
33. "By his mercy I have received Your interview here. Consequently I consider that today I have become a successful human being.
34. "I can see that You have bestowed special mercy upon Sarvabhauma Bhattacharya. Therefore You have touched me, although I am untouchable. This is due only to his love for You.
35. "You are the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Narayana Himself, and I am only a government servant interested in materialistic activities. indeed, I am the lowest amongst men of the fourth caste.
36. "You do not fear the Vedic injunctions stating that You should not associate with a sudra. You were not contemptuous of my touch, although in the Vedas You are forbidden to associate with sudras.
37. "You are the Supreme Personality of Godhead Himself; therefore no one can understand Your purpose. By Your mercy, You are touching me, although this is not sanctioned by the Vedas.
38. "You have come here specifically to deliver me. You are so merciful that You alone can deliver all fallen souls.
39. "It is the general practice of all saintly people to deliver the fallen. Therefore they go to people's houses, although they have no personal business there.
40. "My dear Lord, sometimes great saintly persons go to the homes

of householders, although these householders are generally low-minded. When a saintly person visits their homes, one can understand that it is for no other purpose than to benefit the householders.'

41. "Along with me there are about a thousand men-including the brahmanas-and all of them appear to have had their hearts melted simply by seeing You.

42. "I hear everyone chanting the holy name of Krsna. Everyone's body is thrilled with ecstasy, and there are tears in everyone's eyes.

43. "My dear sir, according to Your bodily features and Your behaviour, You are the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Such behaviour and features are impossible for ordinary living beings, for they cannot possess such transcendental qualities."

44. The Lord replied to Ramananda Raya: "Sir, you are the best of the topmost devotees; therefore upon seeing you everyone's heart has melted.

45. "Although I am a Mayavadi sannyasi, a nondevotee, I am also floating in the ocean of love of Krsna simply by touching you. And what to speak of others?

46. "Knowing this, in order to rectify My heart, which is very hard, Sarvabhauma Bhattacharya asked Me to meet you."

47. In this way each of them praised the qualities of the other, and both of them were pleased to see one another.

48. At this time, one brahmana Vaisnava, following the Vedic principles, came and offered obeisances. He fell flat before Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu and invited Him for lunch.

49. Lord Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu accepted the brahmana's invitation knowing him to be a devotee, and slightly smiling, spoke as follows to Ramananda Rai.

50. "I wish to hear from you about Lord Krsna. Indeed, My mind is

inclined to desire this; therefore I wish to see you again."

51. Ramananda Rai replied, "My Lord, although You have come to correct me, a fallen soul, my mind is not yet purified simply by seeing You. Please stay for five or seven days and kindly cleanse my polluted mind. After that much time, my mind will certainly be pure."

53. Although neither could tolerate the other's separation, Ramananda Rai nonetheless offered his obeisances to Lord Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu and departed.

54. Lord Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu then went to the house of the brahmana who had invited Him and took His lunch there. When the evening of that day arrived, both Ramananda Rai and the Lord were eager to meet one another again.

55. After finishing His evening bath, Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu sat down and waited for Ramananda Rai to come. Then Ramananda Rai, accompanied by one servant, came to meet him.

56. Ramananda Rai approached Lord Sri Caitanya and offered his respectful obeisances, and the Lord embraced him. Then they both began to discuss Kṛṣṇa in a secluded place.

57. Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu ordered Ramananda Rai to recite a verse from the

revealed scriptures concerning the ultimate goal of life. Ramananda replied that if one executes the prescribed duties of his social position, he awakens his original Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

58. "The Supreme Personality of Godhead, Lord Viṣṇu, is worshiped by the proper execution of prescribed duties in the system of varṇa and āśrama. There is no other way to satisfy the Supreme Personality of Godhead. One must be situated in the institution of the four varṇas and āśramas.

59. The Lord replied, "This is external. You had better tell Me of some other means." Ramananda replied, "To offer the results of one's activities

to Krsna is the essence of all perfection."

60. Ramananda Rai continued, "'O son of Kunti, all that you do, all that you eat, all that you offer and give away, as well as all austerieies that you may perform, should be done as an offering unto Me.'"

61. "This is also external," Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu said. "Please proceed and speak further on this matter." Ramananda Rai replied, "To give up one's occupational duties in the varnasrama is the essence of perfection."

62. Ramananda Rai continued,"Occupational duties are described in the religious scriptures. If one analyzes them, be can fully understand their qualities and faults and then give them up completely to render service unto the Supreme Personality of Godhead. such a person is considered a first-class man.'

63. "As stated in scripture (Bg.l8.66): 'After giving up all kinds of religious and occupational duties, if you come to me, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and take shelter, I will give you protection from all of life's sinful reactions. do not worry.'"

64. After hearing Ramananda Rai speak in this way, Lord Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu said, "Go ahead and say something more." Ramananda Rai then replied, "Devotional service mixed with empiric knowledge is the essence of perfection."

65. Ramananda Rai continued, "According to Bhagavad-gita: "One who is thus transcendently situated at once realizes the Supreme Brahman and becomes fully joyful. He never laments nor desires to have anything; he is equally disposed to every living entity. In that state he attains pure devotional service unto Me.'"

66. After hearing this, the Lord, as usual, rejected it, considering it to be external devotional service. He again asked Ramananda Rai to speak further, and Ramananda Rai replied, "Pure devotional service without any touch of speculative knowledge is the essence of perfection."

67. Ramananda Rai continued, "Lord Brahma said, 'My dear Lord, those devotees who have thrown away the impersonal conception of the Absolute Truth and have therefore abandoned discussing empiric philosophical truths should hear from self-realized devotees about your holy name, form, pastimes and qualities. They should completely follow the principles of devotional service and remain free from illicit sex, gambling, intoxication and animal slaughter. Surrendering themselves fully with body, words and mind, they can live in any asrama or social status. Indeed, You are conquered by such persons, although You are always unconquerable.'"

68. At this point, Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu replied, "This is all right, but still you can speak more on the subject." Ramananda Rai then replied, "Ecstatic love for the Supreme Personality of Godhead is the essence of all perfection."

69. Ramananda Rai continued, "As long as there is hunger and thirst, eating and drinking make one feel very happy. When the Lord is worshiped with pure love, transcendental bliss is awakened in the heart of the devotee."

70. "Pure devotional service in Kṛṣṇa consciousness cannot be had even by pious activity in hundreds and thousands of lives. It can be attained only by paying one price—that is, intense greed to obtain it. If it is available somewhere, one must purchase it without delay."

71. Hearing up to the point of spontaneous love, the Lord said, "This is all right, but if you know more, please tell Me." In reply, Ramananda Rai said,

"Spontaneous loving service in servitude—as exchanged by master and servant—is the highest perfection."

72. "A man becomes purified simply by hearing the holy name of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, whose lotus feet create the holy places of pilgrimage. Therefore what remains to be attained by those who have become His servants?"

73. "By serving You constantly, one is freed from all material desires and is completely pacified. When shall we engage as Your permanent eternal servants and always feel joyful to have such a perfect master?"

74. Hearing this from Ramananda Rai, the Lord again requested him to go a step further. In reply, Ramananda Rai said, "Loving service to Krsna rendered in fraternity is the highest perfection.

75. "Those who are engaged in self-realization, appreciating the Brahman effulgence of the Lord, and those engaged in devotional service, accepting the Supremen Personality of Godhead as master, as well as those who are under the clutches of maya, thinking the Lord an ordinary person, cannot understand that certain exalted personalities - after accumulating volumes of pious activities-are now playing with the Lord in friendship as cowherd boys."

76. The Lord said, "This statement is very good, but please proceed even further." Ramananda Rai then replied, "Loving service to the Lord in the parental relationship is the highest perfectional state."

77. Ramananda Rai continued:"O brahmana, what pious activities did Nanda

Maharaja perform by which he received the supreme Personality of Godhead Krsna as his son, and what pious activities did mother Yasoda perform that made the Absolute Supreme Personality of Godhead Krsna call her mother and suck her breasts/

78. "The favor mother Yasoda obtained from Sri Krsna, the bestower of liberation, was never obtained even by Lord Brahma or Lord Siva, nor even by the goddess of fortune, who always remains on the chest of the Supreme Personality of Godhead Visnu."

79. The Lord said, "Your statements are certainly getting better and better one after the other, but surpassing all of them is another transcendental mellow, and you can speak of that as the most sublime." Ramananda Rai then replied "Conjugal attachment for Krsna is the topmost position in love of Godhead.

80. "When Lord sri Krsna was dancing with the gopis in the rasa-lila, the gopis were embraced by the arms of the Lord. This transcendental favor was never bestowed upon the goddess for fortune or the other consorts in the spiritual world. Indee, never was such a thing even imagined by the most beautiful girls in the heavenly planets whose bodily luster and aroma resemble the lotus flower. And what to speak of worldly women who are very beautiful according to the material estimation?'

81. "suddenly, due to the gopis' fellings of separation, Lord Krsna appeared among them dressed in yellow gardents and wearing a flower garland. His lotus face was smiling, and He was directly attracting the mind of Cupid.'

82. "There are various means and processes by which one may attain the favor of Lord Krsna. All those transcendental processes will be studied from the viewpoint of comparative importance.

83. "It is true that whatever relationship a particular devotee has with the Lord is the best for him; still, when we study all the different methods from and neutral position, we can understand that there are higher and lower degrees of love.

84. "Increasing love is ecxperienced in various tastes, one above another. But that love which has the highest taste in the gradual succession of desires manifests itself in the form of conjugal love.'

85. "There is a gradual order of improvement in transcendental mellows from the initial ones to the later ones. In each subsequent mellow the qualities of the previous mellows are manifest, counting from two, then three and up to the point of five complete qualities.

86. "As the qualities increase, so the taste also increases in each and every mellow. therefore the qualities found in santa-rasa, dasya-rasa, sakhya-rasa and vatsalya- rasa are all manifest in conjugal love(madhurya-rasa).

87. "The qualities in the material elements-sky, air, fire, water and earth-increase

one after another by a gradual process of one, two and three, and the last stage, in the element earth, all five qualities are completely visible.

88. "Complete attainment of the lotus feet of Lord Krsna is made possible by love of Godhead, specifically madhurya-rasa or conjugal love. Lord Krsna is indeed captivated by this standard of love. This is also stated in Srimad-Bhagavatam.

89. "Lord Krsna told the gopis: 'The means of attaining My favor is loving service unto Me, and fortunately you are all thus engaged. Those living beings who render service unto Me are eligible to be transferred to the spiritual world and attain eternal life with knowledge and bliss.'

90. "Lord Krsna has made a firm promise for all time. If one renders service unto Him, Krsna correspondingly give him an equal amount of success in devotional service to the Lord.

91. "According to Lord Krsna in Bhagavad-gita (4.11), 'All of them-as they surrender unto Me-I reward accordingly. Everyone follows My path in all respects, O son of Prtha.'

92. "In Srimad-Bhagavatam (10.32.22) it is said that Lord Krsna cannot proportionately reciprocate devotional service in the madhurya-rasa; therefore He always remains a debtor to such devotees.

93. "When the gopis were overwhelmed with dissatisfaction due to Lord Krsna's absence from the rasa lila, Krsna returned to them and told them, 'My dear gopis, our meeting is certainly free from all material contamination. I must admit that in many lives it would be impossible for Me to repay My debt to you because you have cut off the bondage of family life just to search for Me. Consequently I am unable to repay you. Therefore please be satisfied with your honest activities in this regard.'

94. "Although Krsna's unparalleled beauty is the topmost sweetness of love of Godhead, His sweetness increases unlimitedly when He is in the company of the gopis. Consequently Krsna's exchange of love with the gopis is the topmost perfection of love of Godhead.

95. "Although the son of Devaki, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, is also the reservoir of all kinds of beauty, when He is among the gopis He nonetheless becomes more beautiful, for He resembles a marakata jewel surrounded by gold and other jewels."

96. Lord Caitanya Mahaprabhu replied, "This is certainly the limit of perfection, but please be merciful to Me and speak more if there is more."

97. Rai Ramananda replied, "Until this day I did not know anyone within this material world who could inquire beyond this perfectional stage of devotional service."

98. "Among the loving affairs of the gopis," Ramananda Rai continued, "the love of Srimati Radharani for Sri Krsna is topmost. Indeed, the glories of Srimati Radharani are highly estimated in all revealed scriptures."

99. "Just as Srimati Radharani is most dear to Sri Krsna, Her bathing place known as Radha-kunda is also dear to Him. Among all the gopis, Srimati Radhjarani is supermost and very dear to Lord Krsna."

100. "When the gopis began to talk among themselves, they said, 'Dear friends, the gopi who has been taken away by Krsna to a secluded place must have worshiped the Lord more than anyone else.'"

101. Lord Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu said, "Please speak on. I am very happy to hear you because a river of unprecedented nectar is flowing from your mouth."